Volume 10, Edition 4 April 2006

Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club WIRELESS

LAST MONTH, MARCH HARES, THIS MONTH, APRIL FOOLS?

Dick, KF6FZM, Jim, K6UUW, Eileen, KG6QNT, and Dave, KD6FIL Baker to Vegas Com Crew for Sonoma County Sheriffs' Relay Team

HAMFEST APRIL 29!
PLANNING MEETING APRIL 19

It's that time again!

Time for the annual VOMARC Hamfest. VOMARC members will

be once again doing the same darn thing and having the same great time!

The April VOMARC meeting will once again be used to wrap up the final plans for the annual hamfest. This annual event is the major fundraiser for VOMARC, with the proceeds going to fund license classes, our Field Day participation, pay the insurance for the club, and leave a little left over for an Al Fresco operation and barbecue or two.

The half-day event includes a breakfast, with prep starting about 7 am and serving going from 8 to 10. Ed, W1EJ, has graciously agreed to organize the kitchen and pick up the supplies, but he needs a little help. We usually try to have six people for each of two shifts, 7 to 9 and 9 to 11, for the cooking crew. As always, cooks get to eat as much as they can hold. Someone's got to taste the food, right?

The swap meet starts setting up at 7 and selling at 8. Joan, W6WXU, has been overseeing this part of the hamfest for many years, but has put us on notice that if that new grandchild is born during the last week of April, she won't be here. We need a volunteer to act as Joan's understudy.

Joel, NN6J, is our VE liaison and will be running the VE session starting about 9 am. If you are one of Joel's VEs you will be hearing from him about this date.

Ken, N6KM, has arranged for the emergency communications vehicles again. We should also be having an emergency communications forum inside.

This will be another fun event, so be sure to be at the meeting to help with your input to make this another in a long line of successes.

SONOMA TO LAS VEGAS AND BACK
KD6FIL REPORT

Six hardy souls from the VOMARC Radio club braved the elements and traveled to Las Vegas to support the Sonoma Sheriff's Department at the Baker to Vegas Challenge Cup Relay Race. Thanks to Ken, Pat, Jim, Dick, Eileen and Dave for making the trip and Darrell for all the great work prior to take off. Four of the radio crew arrived in Las Vegas on Friday afternoon in a motorhome and set up camp in the KOA at Circus Circus (an attractive piece of asphalt with a pool). The drive down started on Thursday afternoon and almost ended in Rio Vista with a road closure for 2 hours. Thanks to some great radio work by Jim, we got on the air and talked with local hams who kept us updated to the traffic situation. After a night in the overflow camping at Lemoore Naval Airstation, it was on to Las Vegas. There is a heck of a lot of RFI in Las Vegas and we had

a hard time making contact with Ken by radio and ended up using cell phones to figure out what was going on.

Now the really fun stuff started. The Sheriff's Dept. had a command center set up in a suite at the Riviera. We connected with the Sheriff's Dept. and brought the vans over to the campsite to wire up the power and get the radios installed. Unfortunately one van was not expected until very late so that was going require some early work on Saturday before the race. After wiring up the two vans and sending them on their way, less the TinyTrackers that still needed programming we had dinner and walked over to the meeting with the Fremont Ham group, who set up the repeater network we would be using. It is quite an impressive thing to set up a repeater network in the middle of the desert, and it functioned flawlessly throughout the race.

On Saturday morning we got an early start (6AM) and installed the radio in the last van and programmed the repeater frequencies that were given to us the night before. Upon turning on one of the trackers, it went to continuous transmit and the little tracker was very hot and looked like the plastic was starting to melt. Not a good sign. The burning smell was not good either. The radio box and tracker were quickly swapped out and the vans were sent on their way. A laptop and radio were setup in the Sheriff's command center so that you could see the van using APRS. (We ended up only beaconing from one van after burning up one of the trackers)

The race starts 17 miles north of Baker California and is almost 2 hours driving from Las Vegas. Needless to say there was a lot of time in the vans for the intrepid radio operators. The race runs north along the eastern edge of Death Valley and then turns east and passes Pahrump and then over one last pass and into Las Vegas. The landscape is very spectacular with lots of rugged hills, but not the place to be in the heat of summer. I was glad it was the first weekend of April and I am sure the runners were too. The Sheriff's Dept finished in around 19 hours and placed 34 out of 40 teams in their class and bested their time from last year by 20 minutes. The radios worked, but improvements are needed in the antenna department and in the TinyTracker connections. Thanks to Ken and some duct tape the tracker cables were held together and we were told after the event that our tracker never missed a beat and all the packets were received by net control. They knew where we were the whole time. Will wonders never cease?

The trip home had more stop and go traffic on Sunday. After a night at Edwards Air Force Base the crew arrived home on Monday, tired but happy and still talking to each other after 5

days and 4 nights in a motorhome. Would I do it again? Yes, it was a lot of fun with a lot of great people. It is a great opportunity to see how an emergency network can be set up on short notice and function in a very harsh environment. We tested our gear and found out what worked and what didn't. I am still waiting for my get out of jail free card. I just hope I don't ever need it.

SONOMA GROUP AT THE BAKER TO VEGAS EVENT. K6UUW REPORT

Jim, K6UUW, Dick, KF6FZM, Ken, N6KM, Dave, KD6FIL, and Eileen, KG6QNT participated in this year's Baker to Vegas running event.

The purpose was to support the Sonoma County sheriff's team with communications.
The race starts at Baker, Ca and ends in Las Vegas, Nevada with a lot of lonely desert in between. The group was able to use the repeater network setup by the Fremont amateur group. You might recall Ron's recent presentation.

Four remote repeaters were set up prior to the race, UHF for voice and VHF for APRS.

The group, with the help of Darrel, WD6BOR, put together tracker boxes, consisting of a GPS receiver, VHF radio and a UHF radio. These units were wired directly to the vehicle battery.

The race takes about 24 hours to complete when the travel time is added. Several shifts were implemented so that the runner follow van was staffed for the entire race. The sheriff command center also had com equipment. Dave set up his laptop computer with a VHF radio so the sheriff team could see the progress of their runners. They were very impressed!

It was a long day for all involved but it was an enjoyable experience.
Hope to have more folks join us next year.

73, Jim, K6UUW

2006 CALENDER

The following listing gives the dates of VOMARC meetings, activities and other events of interest to our members.

April 19, meeting Sonoma Developmental Center
April 29, Ham Fest, VE session, Sonoma Vet's Building.

May 6, club breakfast, Izza's, and Elmer Saturday
May 17, meeting Sonoma Fire Department.

June 2-4, Redwood Coast Convention, Ferndale
June 3, club breakfast, Izza's.
June 10-12, ARRL VHF QSO Party
June 21, meeting Sonoma Developmental Center
June 24th & 25th, Field Day.

July 1, club breakfast, Izza's
July 4, Fourth of July Parade, info at future meetings
July 19, 2006, meeting Sonoma Fire Department

August 5, club breakfast, Izza's. Elmer Sat.
August, 16, meeting Picnic, probably Sonoma Police Department
August 19, VE session, SDC

Sept 2, club breakfast, Izza's
September 9-11, ARRL VHF QSO party
Sept 11, contest, more info at future meetings
September 20, meeting, Sonoma Developmental Center
September 23? Vintage Festival Parade, more info later.

October 7, club breakfast, Izza's.
October 18, meeting, Sonoma Fire Department
October 13-15, Pacificon Hamvention, San Ramon
October license upgrade classes, more info and date later.

VOMARC MEETING MINUTES MARCH 15, 2006

Meeting was called to order at 7:45PM.

Introductions were made.

Letter from Viola Spencer, Glen's daughter, was read regarding his becoming a silent key.

Minutes of the February, 2005, meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's report: Approximately $1500 in the bank. A couple of outstanding bills have not been submitted to Ken, N6KM. There was a donation from the members of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department to be help specifically for financing our participation in the Baker to Vegas event.

Jim Hill, K6UUW, reported on the Napa club's ham licensing class and test. There were 9 people in the class that took the various tests--all passed. The class was eight hours on Saturday, four hours on Sunday. After a lunch break on Sunday, the test was administered. Jim would recommend our class be held in this same format with the exception that more than one instructor help with the class. This would mean adding one extra VE session to our existing VE schedule. Jim has the Napa class format on CD.

ACS report: The last face to face meeting was canceled due to weather. Another needs to be scheduled, but with the already full schedule of events for the club, it may be postponed to June. Ken, N6KM, requests everyone to contact him with their current, updated address, phone, and e-mail information so he can be sure the ACS information list is accurate.

Old Business: The voice communication will be on 440m, the date on 2m with GPS. Headquarters for the race is at Circus Circus in Las Vegas. There is still the need for a couple UHF rigs and some mag-mount antennas, as well as volunteers. Jim showed us the boxes that contain the radio gear. There are three boxes now and a fourth is needed. There are three repeaters set up along the race course which runs from Baker, CA, through Parump, to Las Vegas, NV.

New Business: NARC data base is down due to personnel changes. The NARC general meeting will be April 1, 2006. Anyone interested in 440 is asked to please be there. All reps for the repeaters need to be there. There will be an election of officers at the meeting. The main topic will be reforming the 440 repeater.

VE sessions: At the last session, there was one person who took the code test and failed and the same person took the general written test and passed. There has only been one person at each of the last two VE sessions. We either need to advertise the sessions more, or cut down the number of sessions we sponsor during the year and schedule only two-one during the ham fest and one during the license class.

Darrel, WD6BOR, ordered materials for the Baker to Vegas race and ended up with a surplus of fuse holders. They are too light for the needs for the race, but will take 15 amp automobile fuses just fine. They are available to club members for $1.00 each or 6 = $5.00.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM.

Emily Clark, K1DID, who is on the Board of Directors for Amsat, gave the presentation on the status of all the amateur satellites. Emily is an area coordinator for Amsat as is Alan Bowker. Anyone wanting more information on the satellites may go to AMSAT.org and look for satellite status.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Brady, W6WXU

THE VOMARC WIRELESS

VOLUME 10 EDITION 4

A publication of VOMARC, the Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club – W6AJF

Frank C. Jones – W6AJF

Honorary President in Perpetuity

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Dan Sorrick, KG6LJN – President

Dave Dammuller, KD6FIL– Vice-President

Joan Brady, W6WXU – Secretary

Ken McTaggart, N6KM – Treasurer

Eileen Adams, KG6QNT, Membership Chair

Mike Miller, WB6TMH – Radio Officer

Ken McTaggert, N6KM – ACS

Jan Bush, AE6FQ – Webmeister

Joel Nadler, NN6J – VE Liaison

Jim Hill, K6UUW, Elmer Coordinator

Darrel Jones, WD6BOR – Editor

Receipt of the Wireless is one of the most sought after benefits of membership in VOMARC.

CLUB MEETINGS are held on the third Wednesday of each month, alternating between McDougal Hall at the Sonoma Developmental Center, Eldridge, and the Sonoma Fire Station, 630 2nd Street West, Sonoma. Meetings start at 19:30 local (7:30 P.M.).

WEB PAGE:
http://www.vomarc.org/

Nets are held every Wednesday night at 19:30 (7:30 P.M.) local, except meeting nights on the 145.350 repeater, -600 kHz, PL 88.5 Hz.

ACS holds a net each Monday evening at 19:30 local on the 146.205, +600, PL 88.5 Hz repeater.

PACKET STATION INFO: The VOMARC packet station is on 144.910 as "SNV1EC". "SNVGW" can be used as a gateway digipeating on 223.66 MHz. The node name is "SNVND".

CLUB BREAKFASTS are held on the first Saturday of each month at Issa's Restaurant, 18999 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma. The fun starts at 09:30 local.

Comments and submissions of material may be sent to:

wd6bor@vom.com

Valley of the Moon ARC, Inc.

175 First Street West

Sonoma, CA 95476

Valley of the Moon ARC
175 First Street West

NOTICE!!! THE APRIL VOMARC MEETING IS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, AT 7:30 P.M. AT McDOUGAL HALLTHE SONOMA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER
CU THERE!

VOMARC MEMBERSHIP

VOMARC 2006 Membership Dues: $15/year individual; $5/year family member.

VOMARC encourages its members to join the ARRL. More information is available at www.arrl.org.
QST is available to blind and physically handicapped individuals on audio cassette from the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Call 1-800-424-8567.

Name:_____CALL:_____EMAIL:_____

Address:_____APT:_____

City:_____State:_____ZIP:_____

Name:_____CALL:_____EMAIL:_____

Name:_____CALL:_____EMAIL:_____

VOMARC: $_____

Membership Moment, From the Database Queen

Please check the mailing label on this newsletter. It tells you when your VOMARC dues are due. Dues may be mailed to Ken N6KM, 402 Fourth Street East, Sonoma, CA 95476, or brought to the next meeting. If there is any mistake, please do not shoot the messenger; email Eileen KG6QNT at Eileen@vom.com. Your check should be made payable to: **VOMARC**